

Corps merger with Action and discuss my amendment.

In addition to hearing Mr. Blatchford, Director of the Peace Corps, the committee will take testimony from others who ask to be heard. They are requested to get in touch with Mr. Arthur M. Kuhl, chief clerk of the committee.

The hearing will take place in public at 10 a.m. in room 4221 in the New Senate Office Building.

NOTICE OF HEARINGS BY SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL LAWS AND PROCEDURES

Mr. McCLELLAN, Mr. President, I should like to announce that the Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures will continue its series of hearings on the recommendations of the National Commission on Reform of the Federal Criminal Laws on July 19 and 20, 1971. The hearings will begin each day at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2228, New Senate Office Building. Further information on the hearings can be obtained from the subcommittee staff in room 2204, extension 53281.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

LAOS—FURTHER U.S. MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THIS SECRET WAR

Mr. SYMINGTON, Mr. President, several recent news articles report a new, hitherto secret, military operation being conducted in Laos by irregular units under the command of Gen. Vang Pao, commander of Military Region No. 2. The first of these was a story by Tammy Arbuckle, published in the Washington Star of July 7, and reprinted in the New York Times of July 8; also an article by D.E. Ronk, published in the Washington Post of July 8. As these reporters make clear, considerable American support has been involved.

An article, by Marilyn Berger, published in the Washington Post of July 9, reports the statements of U.S. and Lao officials on the operation, statements indicating a certain amount of confusion as to the respective responsibilities of the Lao and U.S. Governments for the new offensive.

Apparently this operation by Lao and Thai irregulars, whose costs are paid by U.S. funds appropriated by Congress, has been under way since late June; but we in the Congress, who have appropriated the funds, have had to learn about it in the press. In fact, had there been no press reports, we might never have learned about it. Indeed, as Mr. Arbuckle reported in another article, published in the Washington Star, American officials in Laos did not acknowledge the true scope of the operation until July 9. Mr. Arbuckle notes in his article of July 7:

It is almost unbelievable that after Senate censure and publication of the Pentagon documents, a U.S. mission in Laos should once again resort to secrecy, particularly concerning a United States-run operation close to North Vietnam and China.

Surely we will all agree with that statement.

The press stories report that these irregular units are being led by American military men in the employ of the Central Intelligence Agency and that top Lao military officers insist that the operation is being coordinated by the CIA. A State Department spokesman has said that American are not actually leading any of the forces in this operation. But he has admitted that we are providing logistic and air support and I am sure he would not deny that these irregular units are directed by U.S. Government officials.

Both Mr. Arbuckle and Mr. Ronk report that American Embassy officials in Vientiane put the responsibility for the operation on Gen. Vang Pao, saying that he "is very much his own man." Mr. Ronk adds that American sources say:

No matter what anyone says, he does pretty much what he wants.

Knowing what I do know now about our activities in Laos, this statement is ridiculous on its face. We recruit and train these irregular forces. We provide them with all their equipment and ammunition. We transport them to battle in American planes, as the press stories make clear. It is further reported that American engineers were involved in clearing mines from landing strips on the plain and that U.S. Air Force crane helicopters were used to move heavy equipment into forward areas.

Furthermore, it is inconceivable that offensive actions of the magnitude described could have been undertaken without direct air support by U.S. fighter bombers based in Thailand. It is, therefore disingenuous if not actually deceitful to shift the blame on Gen. Vang Pao so as to absolve ourselves of any responsibility for this military engagement.

Actually, if we were able to accept as accurate the state ment that Gen. Vang Pao "does pretty much what he wants," we should be even more disturbed; because if this statement were true, it would mean that, despite the enormous U.S. involvement and participation in this Laotian war, we cannot control actions on the part of local Lao military commanders which risk causing a new escalation of the fighting, the costs of which fighting is borne by the United States.

One might well ask also about what additional risk arises from the involvement of Thai troops in an operation of this type and character. Given the fact that the United States is committed by treaty to the defense of Thailand, should not the Congress seek assurance that the use of U.S.-financed Thai troops in Laos will not provoke a North Vietnamese response that would result in that Thailand commitment being invoked?

The risks inherent in this new offensive, particularly the possibility that it may undercut the tentative progress which has been made toward talks between Prime Minister Souvanna and the Pathet Lao looking toward a reestablishment of the 1962 Accords, raise once more the question: Just what are the objectives of U.S. policy in Laos?

Do we intend to continue to prosecute the war in northern Laos as an adjunct to the war in Vietnam, or do we support with sincerity efforts toward a Laotian political settlement?

One explanation could be that there is disagreement within the executive branch on our objectives in Laos. Would it not be interesting to know, for example, whether the principal force behind this new offensive was the Department of State, or the influence of military planners who view Indochina as one vast American theater of operations.

We of Congress have a right to question the wisdom of this latest Laotian operation, and to deplore the secrecy which surrounds it. We also have the right to resent the high-handedness of the executive branch in not consulting Congress before undertaking a major military operation with funds Congress appropriated; an operation which may seriously affect not only our interests in Laos, but also in all of Indochina as well as in Thailand.

I would earnestly hope that the Senate would bear this case in mind when considering the amendment I have proposed to the Defense authorization bill that would limit the funds which can be obligated or expended in Laos, exclusive of air operations over the Ho Chi Minh Trail area in southern Laos, to \$200 million.

It is only through some control of the funds it appropriates that the Congress can have any real knowledge of, or exercise any restraint on, this dangerous situation.

Also, I invite the attention of Senators to a brief news item, following the summary of the Washington Star report from Laos, in the July 8 issue of the New York Times entitled "Cambodian Plan Said To End." This report quotes "United States sources" as saying that the United States has abandoned its secret program of training regular Cambodian troops in Laos, but is continuing to train Cambodian guerrillas.

This is a program which has heretofore been kept classified by the executive branch. Let us hope that its confirmation by U.S. sources will end that ban, and that knowledge of that portion of the report on Laos by two members of the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee which related to this subject will no longer be withheld from the American people.

While on the subject of declassification, the subcommittee staff was told by the State Department this morning, specifically by Mr. Joseph Wolf, that the memorandum to the Secretary of State on the declassification of certain portions of the June 7 closed session of the Senate on Laos has not yet been acted on but is still being considered. I remind Senators that, as I have reported to them on both June 30 and July 7, by Friday, June 25, the specific points had been defined on which there was disagreement between representatives of the Foreign Relations Committee and representatives of the executive branch on the need for continued security classification. Over 2

weeks have now passed, but still there has been no decision.

Meanwhile, as noted above, a new military offensive has been launched in Laos, spearheaded by precisely those American supported forces, Laos and Thai, which the executive branch seems most determined to screen with official secrecy.

I ask unanimous consent that the press articles I have cited be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the articles were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Star, July 7, 1971]
PLAIN OF JARS OPERATION WITH U.S. AID REPORTED

(By Tammy Arbuckle)

VIENTIANE.—The United States has launched a new secret operation against the Plain of Jars, a Communist-held area in northern Laos, well-informed sources say. "Commando raiders," some led by American military men in CIA employ have penetrated as far as Lima 22, an air strip in the east central plain.

U.S. aircraft are landing on the plain. An Air America C123 transport was stranded with its American crew on the plain for a night, according to well-informed sources. U.S. officials, however, refuse to discuss the operation making it difficult to assess the operation's exact magnitude or objectives.

One American source claimed Meo Gen. Vang Pao was "strengthening and improving his defensive position." Sources said Vang Pao took Ban Na, a key hill overlooking the plain last Tuesday. Unfortunately this claim of strengthening defenses does not jell with the U.S. presence on the plain or the excessive secrecy cloaking the operation on the part of U.S. and Lao officials.

FRAUGHT WITH DANGER

To clear North Vietnamese from the hills south of the plain and establish positions on hilltops overlooking the plain would be excellent, as it would give Vang Pao's forces a breather until the next dry season.

However, to go onto the plain is fraught with both military and political danger.

In 1969, a joint U.S. and Lao operation, About Face took the plain from the Communists briefly, but resulted in massive Hanoi retaliation which drove CIA-led Meos back farther than ever before and almost resulted in the secret base of Long Chen falling. A new offensive could mean the final end to feelers for talks between the government and Communists and lead to fresh Hanoi offensives. Hanoi has frequently made clear it will not tolerate a U.S. or government presence on the Plain of Jars and has sufficient force to push the corrupt, ill-managed Lao forces off the plain again whenever it wants.

Some military sources have suggested that the Plain of Jars push is to relieve the pressure on the Meo base of Bouam Long, north of the plain.

When correspondents tried to find what the operation was about Gen. Thong Punh Knoksy, the government spokesman, dodged into the corridors of Lao-headquarters. U.S. officials adamantly refuse to speak unless Thong Punh speaks first.

It is almost unbelievable that after Senate censure and publication of the Pentagon documents, a U.S. mission in Laos should once again resort to secrecy particularly concerning a U.S. run operation close to North Vietnam and China.

The operation previously resulted in tough Communist retaliation and caused considerable government and civilian loss in 1969. There can be no doubt the operation is considerable in size. The Pathet Lao radio which, although it is Communist, has been most truthful to date on Lao operations, says three regiments of Vang Pao's forces are in-

volved. Vientians military sources say two Thai battalions and six Lao Meo battalions are involved. U.S. air power is again extremely active over the plain, where some 5,000 civilians are still living. American embassy officials are trying to blame Vang Pao for the operation. "Vang Pao is very much his own man, three American officials said separately.

As all three used the same words, one can only assume somebody told them to say this. Vang Pao's informers are advised, paid, armed, clothed and sometimes led by CIA employees and it is impossible for the general to do anything big without American approval. Some middle-level Americans are already having second thoughts.

They fear that if Vang Pao finds no early Hanoi opposition he may continue to advance, bringing the U.S. into a new northern Laos debacle.

[From the New York Times, July 8, 1971]
CIA AIDES REPORTED LEADING COMMANDO RAIDS IN NORTH LAOS

VIENTIANE, LAOS.—A secret operation involving commando raiders, some led by employees of the Central Intelligence Agency, is reported under way against the Communist-held Plain of Jars in northern Laos.

According to well-informed sources, United States aircraft have been landing on the plain, and one C-123 transport was stranded with its American crew there for a night.

The informants said the commandos had penetrated as far as an airstrip in the east central part of the plain called Lima 22.

United States and Laotian officials here have refused to comment on the reported operation.

[In Washington, State Department officials said they were checking the situation and had no immediate comment.]

One American source said privately that the Meo leader, Gen. Vang Pao, whose C.I.A.-backed forces are based at Long Tieng, southwest of the plain, was "strengthening and improving his defensive position."

Some military sources suggested that the reported operation was being conducted by the Meo base of Bouam Long, north of the plain.

Informants said two Thai battalions and six Meo battalions were involved. The Pathet Lao radio said the operation was being conducted by three regiments of General Vang Pao's forces.

In 1969, a joint United States-Laotian operation took the plain from Communist troops briefly but this led to a large North Vietnamese counterstroke, which drove the Meos back and almost resulted in the fall of Long Tieng.

CAMBODIAN PLAN SAID TO END

PNOMPENH, CAMBODIA.—The United States has abandoned its secret program of training regular Cambodian troops on Laos, United States sources said today, but is continuing to train Cambodian guerrillas.

The sources said that the program, financed by the Central Intelligence Agency ended last month when a 500-man Cambodian army battalion wound up a three-month training course in the Laotian panhandle.

[From the Washington Post, July 8, 1971]
LAOS BEGINS DRIVE FOR PLAIN OF JARS
(By D. E. Ronk)

VIENTIANE.—Little opposition is being met by CIA-supported Meo units under the command of Maj. Gen. Vang Pao as they build their rainy season offensive in northern Laos on to the Plain of Jars from Long Cheng.

Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces appear to be withdrawing north and west off the 30-mile-square upland plain they have held since its recapture from Meo forces in early 1970, according to informed sources in Vietnam.

Striking-northeast and northwest of their

mountain base just north of the plain the irregulars reoccupied Ban Na, overlooking key passes into Long Cheng, early last week. Then they struck at Xleng Khoang airfield 30 miles east, occupying it late in the week.

Since occupying the airfield 100 miles northeast of Vientiane and beginning their commando raids, Meo soldiers have uncovered significant amounts of enemy armaments, including 122-mm rockets and small arms, strewn in the open.

Vang Pao is not at the scene of the fighting, according to informed sources, but is recovering from a serious illness. Command of the Meo troops is believed to be held by a committee of four junior officers working with American advisers.

Informed sources in Vientiane say that the offensives thrusts onto the plain are being made in order to improve Vang Pao's defensive positions around Long Cheng.

Other sources say, however, that the commando units are launching offensive forays northward along the east and west rims of the plain. They say a major offensive build-up is well under way.

Traffic by heavy duty transport planes of Air America into the Xleng Khoang field is reported as "constant," even under extremely hazardous weather conditions.

Pilots ferrying troops and materiel report only sporadic groundfire.

A general news blackout on the offensive is believed to have been ordered by Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma. Neither Laotian nor American spokesmen will comment on the offensive moves, nor on whether there is an official blackout in effect.

Radio Pathet Lao from Sam Neua City, the Pathet Lao headquarters 175 miles northeast of here, is carrying news of offensive moves in the Xleng Khoang area, however, claiming that three regiments of Vang Pao's "mercenaries" supported by "mercenary Thai artillerymen" and heavy American bombing are invading "liberated zones."

There is considerable speculation in Vientiane over the parallels between the current offensive moves and those during 1969 when Vang Pao captured the plain following heavy bombing. The Pathet Lao recaptured the plain in early 1970.

American sources deny that a general offensive of that scope is planned, and even express fear of such a move because of the Meo army's weakened condition, but as one informant said: "Vang Pao is very much his own man, and no matter what anyone says, he does pretty much what he wants."

[From the Washington Post, July 9, 1971]
BOTH UNITED STATES, LAOS CLAIM OTHER IS RUNNING NEW OFFENSIVE

(By Marilyn Berger)

The Laotian government said yesterday that a new offensive on the Plain of Jars is the responsibility of the U.S. embassy, while American officials in Washington sought to describe the action as a Laotian operation.

The unusual statement by a Defense Ministry spokesman in Vientiane appeared to grow out of a feud within the Laotian government over the conduct of military operations.

This statement came as Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) was informing the Senate that the Pentagon was opposing his amendment to limit U.S. military assistance to Laos to \$200 million during fiscal 1972.

The Associated Press reported that Gen. Thongphanh Knoksy, the Defense Ministry spokesman, said in Vientiane that there was a new drive on the Plain of Jars by special forces, but he declined to discuss details. "You should ask the American embassy," Thongphanh said. "This is their affair."

Andrew P. Guzowski, a U.S. embassy spokesman, declined comment. But, the AP reported, it is no secret that the Central Intelligence Agency pays, equips and advises the special forces and the Meo tribal army

under Gen. Vang Pao, who is in command on the Plain of Jars region with a base at Long Chen.

Asked whether Vang Pao had informed the Laotian government about his operations, Thongphanh replied, "No, the government is not responsible for this operation."

Analysts here indicated that Vang Pao, who reports directly to Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma and not to the Ministry of Defense, had apparently hit a sensitive nerve. The statement attributing the military operation to the United States was seen here as the ministry's way of hitting back.

State Department spokesman Charles W. Bray, asked about U.S. involvement in the Plain of Jars drive, glossed over the split between regular Laotian forces and the CIA-supported Meos.

"We know that the Royal Lao government is attempting to improve its defensive positions by pushing the North Vietnamese forces out of high ground to the west and to the south of the Plain of Jars," Bray said. "These are the kind of actions the Royal Lao government has traditionally undertaken in the rainy season when the North Vietnamese have difficulty in supplying their forces, so that the Royal Lao government will be in a better position when the North Vietnamese return to the offensive during the dry season which begins in November."

Bray said the United States was providing logistic and air support for this operation "as we have in other operations in Laos."

Bray added that, contrary to some news reports, "No Americans of any description are leading any of the forces in this operation or any other operation in Laos." When questioned, however, he left open the possibility that U.S. advisers were involved. Other American officials said that U.S. advisers stayed at headquarters and did not go into the field.

U.S. officials here said that Vang Pao's forces have won control of the high points all around the Plain of Jars except for the northeastern section, making the plain untenable for the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao.

Symington, whose Foreign Relations subcommittee has put the spotlight on U.S. operations in Laos—both acknowledged and covert—yesterday read into the record a Pentagon statement in opposition to his amendment to limit spending in Laos. That statement said such a limit "would substantially impair our on-going operation in Laos, operations which have been undertaken at the request of the government of Laos to assist it in resisting military takeover by North Vietnam."

While Symington sought in his amendment to put a ceiling of \$200 million on obligations or expenditures for military and economic aid, Secretary of State William P. Rogers has said that the United States is spending "in the neighborhood of \$350 million," exclusive of the cost of U.S. bombing operations, in Laos.

The Pentagon statement said the Symington amendment "would intrude into matters properly within the constitutional authority of the President, as commander-in-chief, to direct military operations in Southeast Asia."

Symington called this an "intriguing comment" in which the Department of Defense "would appear to be saying that the responsibilities the Congress has under the Constitution to raise and support armies does not mean what it says."

The Pentagon also said the amendment could not be administered by the Executive Branch which, according to the statement, maintains records for military assistance service for Southeast Asia "only on an estimate basis." Symington called this a "disturbing" practice. "How can the Executive Branch be certain that expenditures do not exceed obligations in each country?" Symington asked.

Instead of being an argument against his amendment, Symington suggested that the admission of this practice served as an argument for its adoption. "It could well force the Executive Branch to institute procedures which will provide accurate accounting . . ." he said.

In Vientiane, meanwhile, Souvanna sent a reply to Prince Souphanouvong, head of the Pathet Lao, about the latter's cease-fire proposal of June 25. Souvanna proposed a general cease-fire within a radius of 30 kilometers (about 20 miles) around the Plain of Jars and discussions at the plain to reach agreement on a full cease-fire.

Souphanouvong had proposed a full cease-fire that would include an end to the American bombing. He suggested meetings alternately at the Plain of Jars and in Vientiane.

Informed sources here said they did not expect Souphanouvong to accept Souvanna's proposal but said that the reply would serve to keep the exchanges going.

[From the Washington Star, July 9, 1971]

LAO TROOPS ADVANCE ON PLAIN

(By Tammy Arbuckle)

VIENTIANE.—Special secret army units under the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, but nominally controlled by Meo General Vang Pao, are reported in virtually control of northeastern, eastern, and southern portions of the Plain of Jars in north Laos.

Lao government military spokesman Gen. Thongphanh Knoksy admitted yesterday that friendly forces had reached the area just south of Woodpecker Ridge. The ridge overlooks the northeast entrance to the plain.

The general said teams were roving over the Plain of Jars searching for Vietnamese and Pathet Lao caches with some success. He said three quarters of the caches found are of food and only one quarter are arms caches. These proportions are directly opposite to the amounts of food and arms caches found when the government took the plain in August 1969.

Gen. Thongphanh said he did not believe the secret army forces are strong enough to cut Route 7 entering the Plain of Jars as they did in 1969. Thongphanh claimed the operation was to prevent Communists attacking Bouam Long, just north of the plain, and concentrating against the joint U.S.-Meo base at Long Chen.

U.S. airpower, according to other sources, is active in the plain area and U.S. engineers are working on strips south of old Meo strongpoint Lima 22. The U.S. Air Force uses flying crane helicopters to bring and remove heavy equipment.

Gen. Thongphanh declined to give further information on the Plain of Jars operation. He directed correspondents to ask the U.S. Embassy. U.S. officials, however, refused to give information. One official's reply to persistent press queries was "go to hell."

In the picture of the operation which appears, however, five or six battalions of clandestine army forces are placed south and southeast of the rim of the Plain of Jars centered on Banna which Vang Pao's forces took Tuesday. There and at other places near the rim, two special battalions were fanning out across the plain in teams searching for caches.

Well informed sources say there is no intention of taking territory, only knocking out enemy supply lines for a more effective defense of Long Chen. To hold the plain would be militarily and politically unwise. Undoubtedly team sweeps is the best plan. North Vietnamese forces remain east of Long Chen and if their supplies are cut off Long Chen would be in a better military position.

However, informed military sources fear Vang Pao will be tempted to take the plain. This may cause another severe defeat, such as in February when Hanoi troops swept him from the plain.

BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS AT CONCORD ACADEMY

Mr. PERCY, Mr. President, on June 3, during commencement week activities at Concord Academy in Concord, Mass., the school's headmaster, David Aloian, delivered an unusually perceptive baccalaureate address to the graduating class, of which my daughter was a member.

Mr. Aloian, who is leaving Concord after 8 years of service as headmaster to take a similar position at the Belmont Hill School in Belmont, Mass., has spent most of his life working with young people. He understands their thoughts and concerns, and as his baccalaureate address suggests, he knows how to communicate with them.

Realizing that the 17- and 18-year-olds in his audience were well informed and highly educated, with a deep interest in public policy problems, Mr. Aloian spoke to them as mature young adults, avoiding the patronizing approach that young people understandably resent.

The senior class at Concord Academy was representative in many respects of interested, involved young Americans throughout the Nation—the generation that will be called upon to guide us through a period of revolutionary change. I am sure that the Concord graduates will respond to Mr. Aloian's plea for them to "take a full and active part in the great effort to make a better community, to make a better world," and I am equally confident that their contemporaries across the country will respond with comparable enthusiasm. Ratification of the 26th amendment, making more than 11 million American between 18 and 21 eligible to vote for the first time, provides an outlet for these concerned young people to responsibly express their views. I am convinced that a vast majority of them are ready to do so.

Mr. President, I believe Mr. Aloian's address would be of interest to Senators; consequently, I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD. I particularly commend it to the distinguished Senator from Missouri (Mr. SYMINGTON), who has close ties to Concord Academy through his granddaughter.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OUR RESOLUTION

I want to begin by promising you that you face difficult years ahead. On the personal level you move from a small school community, organized for your success and development, to large university communities which must be impersonal and even indifferent. You will face important life decisions: a career, personal commitments, marriage, a life's work. On a national level, you will gain full citizenship in and awareness of your country, which, despite its greatness and its shining promise, copes with serious problems of race, cities, poverty, economic stability, education, and internal divisions. On a world level, you will have to face problems of population, trade, race, rapidly diminishing resources, environmental deterioration, national fears.

You live in a time of tumultuous change and unrest, a time of world wide revolution. I believe we are in the midst of one of those great, creative, stormy, revolutionary periods of ferment, re-evaluation, and progress. In a few moments I want to say what I think